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New York

President: Mr. Lykketoft ..... (Denmark)

In the absence of the President, Ms. Moses (Nauru), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

Tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, sixth Secretary-General of the United Nations

The Acting President: It is our sad duty to pay tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, sixth Secretary-General of the United Nations, who passed away on 16 February.

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, who is travelling on official business at this time. I also wish to acknowledge the presence among us today of Mr. Thabo Mbeki, former President of the Republic of South Africa.

This morning we gather together to mark the passing of the sixth Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. As the organ that ultimately appoints the Secretary-General, it is fitting that the General Assembly pay its respects to the man who led the Organization from 1992 to 1996.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali was a first for the United Nations — our first African, and indeed our first Arab Secretary-General. He held office during a period of great change and incredible challenges. Taking over so soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Mr. Boutros-Ghali worked tirelessly to reform this large and at times unwieldy Organization and to manage the United Nations response to appalling crises in Europe, Africa and beyond.

Outcomes from major conferences during his tenure in Rio, Vienna, Beijing and Cairo, together with his Agenda for Peace and his Agenda for Development, can now be seen very clearly at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). His period at the helm demonstrates ever so clearly that the position of Secretary-General is indeed one of the most difficult jobs in the world.

On behalf of this entire Assembly, I would like to extend my most sincere condolences to the family and friends of Mr. Boutros-Ghali who mourn his passing today. I extend also my sympathies to the people and the Government of Egypt, who have lost one of their greatest sons and statesmen.

I would ask the members of the General Assembly rise to observe a minute of silence in memory of Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General (*spoke in French*): I thank the General Assembly for having decided to pay tribute to my eminent predecessor, Boutros Boutros-Ghali. I offer my sincere condolences to his widow, Mrs. Laila Boutros-Ghali, the other members of the Boutros-Ghali family, the Egyptian people and all those who deplore this loss.

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(*spoke in English*)

Boutros Boutros-Ghali had both the fortune and misfortune to serve as the first post-Cold War Secretary-General of the United Nations. While the United Nations was never as paralysed during the Cold War as many have portrayed, the new dynamic gave the Organization new leeway to act. That brought promise and peril — and Mr. Boutros-Ghali experienced both.

In his very first month in office, Mr. Boutros-Ghali presided over the first-ever summit meeting of the Security Council — a powerful symbol of the will of world leaders to make greater use of the United Nations. "As the new era begins", Mr. Boutros-Ghali told the assembled leaders, "it calls for both ideas and action to place international life on stronger foundations" (*S/PV.3046, p. 8*).

Mr. Boutros-Ghali was a fount of ideas, building on his long career as a professor of international law. He broke barriers as the first African and Arab Secretary-General of the United Nations and consistently gave voice to the poorest and least powerful members of the human family. He steered the Organization through a series of world conferences on the environment, population, human rights, women's rights, social development and the unique challenges faced by the world's small island developing States. Those global gatherings captured the imagination and gave the world exciting new policies, directions and purpose. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), which is our inspiring new template today, owes much to the pioneering intellectual work of the 1990s.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali also oversaw remarkable growth in peacekeeping. His Agenda for Peace report (A/47/277) made far-reaching proposals for fortifying that flagship United Nations activity, many of which have since become standard practice, but also many of which remain unfulfilled. During his time in office, peacekeeping helped Cambodia, El Salvador, Mozambique and other countries emerge from conflict. At the same time, engagements in the Balkans, Somalia and Rwanda highlighted the gap between the needs of a given situation and the material support and political unity required from Member States, in particular the Security Council. There, too, the echoes resound and, indeed, haunt us to this very day.

Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali pursued major restructuring efforts, managerial reforms and other steps that strengthened the United Nations. In his report entitled "An Agenda for Democratization" (A/51/761), he broke new ground in emphasizing the links among peace, development and democracy at the national level and in his calls for the democratization of the international system.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali won respect near and far, including as a leading Egyptian diplomat before joining the United Nations and, afterwards, as Secretary General of the International Organization of la Francophonie. Yet he never attempted to endear himself to everybody. Perhaps he was too direct for some; he might have been too professorial for others; some definitely found him too independent — a goal that he considered among the highest virtues for any Secretary-General of the United Nations.

I thank my predecessor for his lasting contributions to our work and I invite all representatives to share their thoughts and tributes in a book of condolences, which has been placed near the Meditation Room just outside this Hall. At a tumultuous time, Boutros Boutros-Ghali helped the United Nations find its footing in a new global landscape. As we do the same today, let us continue to build on his legacy. May he rest in peace.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Swaziland, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Mnisi (Swaziland): The Group of African States is saddened by the passing of His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, an illustrious son of Africa and erudite diplomat. His ascendency to the helm of our global Organization as the first Secretary-General from the African continent was a great source of pride for us in Africa. We extend our heartfelt condolences to the family of the late Boutros Boutros-Ghali, as well as to the Government and people of Egypt for their loss.

As the sixth Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali led the Organization during a very challenging period in a post-Cold War era as fundamental changes shaped geopolitical order. Though daunting were his tasks in steering the Organization and, against the backdrop of myriad of violent conflicts erupting around the world, including in Africa, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali rose to the challenge and provided a vision for making the United Nations more efficient in addressing the challenging context of global insecurity. His landmark report "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277) continues to be the lodestar for the United Nations doctrine for preventive diplomacy,

peacemaking and peacekeeping. In the Agenda for Peace, the late Boutros Boutros-Ghali also provided his manifesto for fostering partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations in the context of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

As we collectively construct the new peacebuilding architecture and also translate into reality the recommendations emanating from the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (see S/2015/446), invariably, we are building on the legacies of Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

The timing of his death, as the United Nations celebrates its seventieth anniversary, impels us to pay tribute to his sterling leadership of the milestone commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and the adoption of the historic declaration (resolution 50/6) by world leaders. His statement delivered during the special commemorative meeting of the General Assembly to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, held on 22 October 1995, foretold the problems we are today confronting as humankind.

> "The world of the twenty-first century will confront two great opposing forces: globalization and fragmentation. A new dialectic has already begun ... Globalization will generate a number of problems. Financial flows of vast magnitude sweep across the world. Alarming environmental events will expose the planet to permanent damage. Transnational crime will grow. The global communications revolution will generate pressures which our national institutions were not designed to address." (*A/50/PV.35, p. 2*)

May his soul rest in perfect peace.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of India, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States.

Mr. Akbaruddin (India): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Member States of the Asia-Pacific Group.

We are deeply saddened by the demise of the sixth Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Mr. Boutros-Ghali was the first Arab and African to be the Secretary-General. He presided over the United Nations during the historic moments in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War period when the United Nations was looked to for solutions to global problems.

The late Secretary-General brought to the United Nations the wealth of experience he had gained during his successful stints as Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and, subsequently, Deputy Prime Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt. Mr. Boutrous-Ghali showed no hesitation in posing tough questions to Member States, and his aspiration was for the United Nations to be a truly democratic body. His landmark report, "An Agenda for Peace: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping" (A/47/277), submitted within six months of the start of his tenure as the Secretary-General, indicated that he meant serious business at the United Nations. The report was an apt response to shape the Organization's approach to the beginning of a new era.

During the late Secretary-General's tenure, there was a remarkable rise in United Nations peacekeeping. He rendered invaluable services for international peace and security. We also note that Mr. Boutros-Ghali made strenuous efforts to strengthen the United Nations system as a whole. Mr. Boutros-Ghali continued to remain engaged with intellectual and diplomatic activities even after he left the United Nations, taking up such positions as the first Secretary General of the International Organization of la Francophonie, and Director of the Egyptian National Council for Human Rights, a position which Mr. Boutros-Ghali occupied until as recently as 2012.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali's passing represents a great loss to humanity, and he has left a vacuum that will be difficult to fill. We extend our deepest condolences to Mrs. Boutros-Ghali, as well as to the rest of the family, the Egyptian people, and to the late Secretary-General's many friends and admirers in the United Nations and around the world.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Armenia, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Mnatsakanyan (Armenia): The members of the Group of Eastern European States join their voice to the expressions of sorrow at the passing of Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, former Secretary-General of the United Nations. The legacy of Mr. Boutros-Ghali is truly impressive. It is a source of deep reflection on the evolution of the Organization over the past 25 years. He led the global Organization in the aftermath of the Cold War, when aspirations and hopes for a better and safer world were considerable, in particular among the

nations of our Group. However, his term bore witness to many devastating and harrowing conflicts and massive tragedies, such as those in Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Organization, its staff and the Secretary-General were stretched to considerable limits.

Our current agenda and the collective effort to reinforce the role of the Organization continue to refer to the legacy of Mr. Boutros-Ghali. The landmark work, entitled "An Agenda for Peace: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping" (A/47/277), remains a reference on which various initiatives of subsequent years were based. His term witnessed a significant rise in peacekeeping and the birth of the concept of post-conflict peacebuilding, which continues to shape our present thinking and efforts with regard to advancing that fundamental function of the Organization.

An accomplished diplomat and a distinguished lawyer, Mr. Boutros-Ghali made a remarkable contribution to his own country, Egypt. As Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Egypt, he played a critical role in advancing regional peace negotiations. For many students, scholars and practitioners of international relations, this phase in history remains a source of study, research and reflection. Not least, as former head of the International Organization of la Francophonie, Mr. Boutros-Ghali leaves behind a valuable legacy for the global community of French-speaking peoples.

The advance of our collective agenda for peace in the present times remains, as ever, a challenge and an ongoing saga. The remarkable legacy of Mr. Boutros-Ghali is one of perseverance and commitment to service for his people and for the world, and it receives our collective admiration and respect. The members of the Group of Eastern European States express their deepest condolences to Mrs. Boutros-Ghali, to Mr. Boutros-Ghali's family and friends, and to the people and Government of Egypt. Their loss and grief are shared by the whole of the United Nations, its staff, and all Member States.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Uruguay, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Ms. Carrión (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, I would like to express our deep condolences on the passing of Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, former Secretary-General of the United Nations. Mr. Boutros-Ghali, the first African and the first Arab to hold that position, led the United Nations during one of the most difficult times in the history of the Organization. He began his term with optimism and hope, impassioned by the end of the Cold War. He faced challenges of great magnitude with the spread of crises and horrors the world thought overcome. Evaluating the legacy of a man is always difficult and risky, especially when the historical circumstances under which he had to act were extremely complex.

Convinced that Mr. Boutros-Ghali put his solid academic training and vast political and diplomatic experience to the service of the Organization, the Latin American and Caribbean Group would like to pay him tribute today. Genuinely concerned about the consequences of war, Mr. Boutros-Ghali emphasized the importance of post-conflict peacebuilding in his historic report, entitled "An Agenda for Peace: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping" (A/47/277), which continues to embody the philosophy of the United Nations and inspire its actions.

The Latin American and Caribbean Group would like to convey to the family of Mr. Boutros-Ghali, and to the Government and people of Egypt, our sincere condolences.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Liechtenstein, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): I have the honour to speak today on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States. We are deeply saddened by the death of former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. We offer our heartfelt condolences to the Secretariat of the United Nations, the people of Egypt and — above all — to his family and friends.

As the sixth of only eight persons to hold what one of his predecessors described as "the most impossible job in the world", Mr. Boutros-Ghali left an indelible legacy that continues to affect our work here at the United Nations until this day. His landmark report, entitled "An Agenda for Peace: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping" (A/47/277), for example, has shaped the way in which the United Nations addresses conflicts by introducing the concept of post-conflict peacebuilding.

Boutros Boutros-Ghali's term in office was marked by a resurgence of multilateralism after the end of the Cold War and an unprecedented demand for the Organization's services in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Mr. Boutros-Ghali did much to shape the United Nations response to these demands. To quote Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon,

> "he showed courage in posing difficult questions to the Member States, and rightly insisted on the independence of his office and of the Secretariat as a whole"(*SG/SM/17544*).

His legacy was not limited to the United Nations, however. His years at the United Nations were preceded by long years of service in the Government of Egypt, culminating in his holding the post of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. Boutros Boutros-Ghali also contributed in many respects to the enrichment of international law, as a highly recognized faculty member, a member of the International Law Commission and a member of the International Commission of Jurists, to name a few of his past affiliations.

He also embodied the dialogue among nations, languages and civilizations that the United Nations was built for. After his term as Secretary-General, he continued to be active, most notably as the first Secretary General of the International Organization of the Francophonie and contributed to the Francophonie's flourishing cooperation with the United Nations.

The United Nations has lost a leader, a friend, an advocate. He will be mourned the world over.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United States, who will speak on behalf of the host country.

Ms. Power (United States of America): I would like to begin by extending the sympathies of the United States to former Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali's family, to his friends, to his wife Laila, to his former colleagues throughout the United Nations family and to the Egyptian people.

My predecessor, Madeleine Albright, once described Boutros Boutros-Ghali as "impressive, blessed with brains, confidence, and style". As today's tributes attest, the Secretary-General was indeed a man of exceptional intellect, talent and conviction. He was an admired academic, publishing a dozen books; a successful peacemaker, helping to negotiate the Camp David Accords in 1978; and a very effective negotiator, quietly helping to secure Nelson Mandela's release from prison and facilitating subsequent talks between Mandela and the apartheid Government. After one conversation with Boutros-Ghali back in 1992, Nelson Mandela told a reporter, "I leave the meeting with a feeling of strength and hope."

Boutros Boutros-Ghali was a man possessed of many gifts — gifts that enabled him to be deliberate even in his use of language. He once told a reporter that "When I have tense relations with my wife, we speak in Arabic. When we talk business, then we speak English. When our relationship is better, then we talk French." If Arabic was his preferred language when times were tense, I am sure he sometimes wished he could speak that language with my Government. The United States and the Secretary-General had our disagreements back in the day, but the United States recognizes the great debt owed to Boutros-Ghali for his lifetime of service, and we will be forever grateful for the impact he had on this institution.

Boutros Boutros-Ghali assumed the helm of the United Nations in the uncertain days following the end of the Cold War. At a time when some wondered if the United Nations would remain relevant beyond its fiftieth birthday, he was determined to shepherd it into the new era. He set out to streamline and strengthen the Secretariat, consolidating disparate offices, abolishing senior positions he judged unnecessary and recruiting high-calibre personnel to build a modernized international civil service. The latter was not always an easy task, he once observed, because "to work here you have to be cuckoo like me".

Boutros-Ghali tried to improve the way the United Nations was managed. He ordered that all the United Nations offices in any given city be consolidated at one location for greater effectiveness and efficiency. On a trip to Accra, he was horrified to discover that while all the United Nations offices had indeed been relocated to one place, a wall nonetheless separated the different agencies, with each still relying on its own administrative team. Outraged, he ordered the wall be torn down at once.

His report "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277), unveiled the year he took office, introduced an ambitious reform plan that, as one newspaper editorial said at the time, "breathed new life into the United Nations". Through efforts like this, he paved the way for improved United Nations diplomacy, peacemaking

and peacekeeping, which are among our most important functions to this day. Advancing such an ambitious agenda was never easy, but Boutros-Ghali foresaw as much. As he settled into his new office early in his tenure, he later recalled,

> "I soon discovered with delight that some tiny birds were conducting their affairs outside my windows, apparently trying to nest there. They were house finches, I was told. I marvelled at how such small creatures could function in the strong winds above the ground. I wondered whether I could do so as well."

The answer, we now know, is that he could and that, indeed, he did. In spite of the winds, he managed to lay the foundations for the United Nations we have today. And in doing so, he made a profound and lasting contribution to the pursuit of global peace and prosperity, the cause to which he dedicated his remarkable life. As we mourn his loss, we honour his legacy by redoubling our efforts to strengthen and improve this Organization so that it may grow ever closer toward realizing the potential that he saw in it.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Lebanon, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

Mr. Salam (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the honour to speak today on behalf of the Group of Arab States. In losing Boutros Boutros-Ghali, we have lost a great man who contributed to the Arab world and the world at large.

Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali held various posts in Egypt, including Minister of State for Foreign Affairs from 1977 to 1991. He was the Head of Government when he was elected Secretary-General. He was the first Arab to hold this post, which he did from 1992 to 1996. He brought to the post his vast experience and professional skill. He was known for his devotion for the Charter of the United Nations and international law. He was a cultivated man and did not let the difficulties that the international community was facing at the end of the Cold War, when he started his mandate, keep him from taking initiatives whose impact is still felt today.

A number of speakers today have referred to Mr. Boutros-Ghali's report "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277), his landmark vision for the role of the United Nations in preventive diplomacy and peacekeeping, which seeks to prevent crises rather simply manage them. Who among us would not want to affirm the importance of allocating sufficient resources for peacekeeping operations? Who among us would not want to preserve the independence of the post of Secretary-General and of the Secretariat as each works to fulfil its mandate?

Finally, I wish to convey my sincerest condolences to the family of Mr. Boutros-Ghali, to the Government and the people of Egypt, to the United Nations and all those worldwide who believe in the importance of diplomacy and who knew this great man and were alongside him as he occupied his various posts.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I wish to express the gratitude of the Government and people of Egypt for this special meeting to pay tribute to Boutros Boutros-Ghali. His passing is a huge loss for Egypt and the United Nations family, and I thank today's speakers for the sincerity of their feelings and emotion. This meeting clearly illustrates the United Nations attachment to and recognition of Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali and the role he played here. He was the elder statesman of Egyptian diplomacy and one of its pillars for over 50 years. His political, diplomatic and legal legacy continues to guide us today.

This United Nations tribute provides an example of how one should pay tribute to such outstanding individuals as Boutros Boutros-Ghali. He gave generously to his country, Africa and the Arab world. He set an example for future generations. He clearly expressed his strong connection to his country, which is one of diverse intellectual, cultural and religious traditions. He was an ardent defender of the rights of the Arab region, and he also fought for Africa. He was proud of his connection to the African continent and fought for the rights of African peoples to freedom and prosperity. He was also an influential politician on the international scene who championed the principles of peace, justice and brotherhood, communication, tolerance and cultural exchange between countries. More than anything, I feel pride at the expressions of condolences, in spite of my sorrow and the fact that his wisdom will be sorely missed during this difficult period and its unprecedented challenges.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali dedicated his life to the cause of peace. He greatly valued human rights and feared no one. He was fiercely independent, and his adversaries — even

more than his friends — testify to how hard he worked during his term in order to consolidate the independence of the Office of the Secretary-General. He paid dearly for that independence, of course, but it remains an example nevertheless. He acted with great professionalism, great realism and the righteousness of a legal scholar attached to the rule of law.

We all knew him as a brilliant scholar, skilful diplomat and influential politician. We knew him as the leader of the International Organization of la Francophonie. He was the first Arab and African to hold the post of Secretary-General during the difficult period that followed the end of the Cold War, as conflicts raged in Somalia, Angola and the former Yugoslavia. During those difficult years, he solidified the United Nations approach in the areas of peacekeeping, peacebuilding and preventive diplomacy. The concepts he developed then remain relevant and in use today, whenever the necessary political will is there.

I would like to conclude with a few words from a 2006 interview that, in my view, reflect the depth of his thought:

> "Cultural pluralism is as important as and multi-party pluralism. Religious, linguistic and cultural pluralism are vitally important hallmarks of a true democracy. We are against cultural hegemony of any sort. Diversity is a mark of a healthy democracy."

I would also like to express my sincerest condolences to the widow of Boutros-Ghali, his acolytes and the Egyptian people.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 33/18 of 10 November 1978 and decision 53/453 of 18 December 1998, I now call on the observer for the International Organization of la Francophonie.

Mr. Tiendrebeogo (International Organization of la Francophonie) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour, on behalf of the International Organization of la Francophonie, to join in the heartfelt tribute to Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali today.

I would like to use this opportunity to echo the words of the Secretary General of the International Organization of la Francophonie, Michaëlle Jean, who expressed her great and profound sadness upon hearing of the death of Mr. Boutros-Ghali, former Secretary-General of the United Nations and first Secretary General of the International Organization of la Francophonie. At the head of the International Organization of la Francophonie from 1998 to 2002, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali gave the organization its full political dimension — a major change that was decided upon during the Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Hanoi in November 1997.

The International Organization of la Francophonie pays tribute to a man who worked tirelessly for world peace, democracy, rights and freedoms. We can never say enough about the tireless efforts he made throughout his academic, political and diplomatic career for the recognition, respect and advancement of those universal values. As an alternative globalist, he had a modern and fair-minded vision of the development of the countries of the South. As an activist for peace, he bequeathed to us the historic report entitled "An Agenda for Peace: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping" (A/47/277), a milestone of the action undertaken by the international community, in particular the United Nations, to consolidate, maintain and re-establish peace.

A visionary, Boutros Boutros-Ghali was also the first to bring the International Organization of la Francophonie to the forefront of international diplomacy. Also a trailblazer, he used these words to define the future of our organization: "La Francophonie will be subversive and imaginative or it will not be." Today, the French-speaking family mourns the loss of a great activist for the organization and a father for institutional and political Francophonie that includes all stakeholders, young people, women, civil society. The International Organization of la Francophonie offers its deepest condolences to the family of Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the Egyptian people and the United Nations family. May the soul of this illustrious man rest in peace.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.